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sounded from within the enclosure. While the women sit and chat after the taro is in the *liga*, Macrabit, as usual, plays the part of the clown. She causes much merriment by taking a fishing-net and walking about with it as if she were a man. Two other old women play a form of hide-and-seek, hiding behind the trees and walking about in a creeping fashion. So also do they sit playfully on the legs and backs of other women. This occurs between women of different moieties, and resembles on a small scale the playful fighting of the pregnancy rites. I was told that it is now done because the boys were to be circumcised soon.

When the food is removed from the *liga*, most of it is left at Ponatlege, although the men eat a small part of it in the compound in front of the men's house, and some small bundles are taken home by the women. As they walk home, single file along the narrow footpath, baskets on their backs, some of them do their dancing step. There is a general air of jollification.

Late that afternoon much excitement and a real "before the ball" atmosphere prevails. The women arrange the yellow *puhpuh* flower in their hair, put on their best loin-cloths and their *lepkeps* (breast ornaments) and *biuks* (arm-bands).[1] At sunset there is a final short dance rehearsal under Ballock's direction. When this is over all the women, much excited and carrying bundles of the yellow *puhpuh* as well as having stuck it behind the ear, start off for Ponatlege. The men set out a bit later. As the women enter the hamlet, an old man gives each one some white lime which she puts on her face.

Women and men from Langania and Ambwa are also present. The latter sit in small groups in front of the men's house and out in the compound. The women begin dancing almost immediately, and the men, much interested, watch

[1] There was also a demand for red crêpe paper and tinsel trimming from me, both of which were twisted around the hair.

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they pause and rest. The women tell me they weep because they fear the pain being inflicted upon their sons, who are themselves afraid. The women, other than the mothers, say that they are sorry for the mothers whose boys are now being circumcised, and that they dance in sympathy with them.

CIRCUMCISION

In the meantime the boys are being circumcised.[1] One hears no sound from the enclosure, and I was told that a piece of wood is put in the boy's mouth to prevent him from crying out. A father will hold his son steady while another man does the cutting, which is now done with a knife, but in the past with a stone instrument.

By the middle of the morning the men and women of Tagam are busy arranging the food in piles. All the women who danced during the night now return to Ponatlege with empty baskets. They stop and sit down just before they enter. This halt just before entering a place happens very frequently and appears to be an act of courtesy; the guests do not want to arrive before the hosts are ready. When the Tagam people have completed the arrangements of the food, the women enter Ponatlege, where the distribution is to take place.

SPEECHES OF WOMEN

Taro and coconuts are arranged in two piles on the ground. A group of Eagle women—all of them wives of the

[1] While I observed all the rites, I did not go into the enclosure to see the boys being circumcised, nor did I go inside the enclosure at any time while the boys were confined there, although it would have been possible for me to have done so. As the preceding description indicated, there was a decided grouping according to sex and a strained, hostile feeling between the men and the women. As I had been identified rather closely with the women, even to the extent of participating in one of the dances, I thought it would be unwise to swerve suddenly to the masculine group.

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later wrapped in leaves and baked in the *liga* separately. The pig is hung on a pole over a fire to be singed, and a few pieces of burning wood are put inside to make it dry. Later it is taken away from the fire and may be kept like this for several days, awaiting distribution at a feast. When prepared for eating it is wrapped in leaves, securely tied, and baked in the *liga*. There is no other method of cooking pig. It is considered excellent food and is essential for a mortuary and *malanggan* feast.

A type of phalanger occasionally caught in the bush is baked in the same manner as pigs. The teeth are first extracted, however, and used to make a necklace.

Turtle

Turtle is not a part of the everyday diet, but is caught occasionally and usually eaten at a feast. It is always cooked by the men. The turtle is laid on its back and its underneath cover (*bungbunga*) cut off and the entrails taken out. These are wrapped in banana leaves, sprinkled liberally with the blood of the turtle, and baked in the *liga*. It is eaten by the men, although not taboo to women. The men like it too much to give it to the women. The back shell (*kukulsun*) is smeared inside with *lest* (lime) and left in the sun to dry. It is used later to make the scoops (*polok*) for eating coconut and to ornament the *kepkep*.

Beta—Sea-worm

The catching of this worm which comes up out of the sea once a year has already been described. Its cooking is quite an intricate process. First the long *mismis* leaves are sewed together, as in the preparation for cooking fish. On top of the *mismis* leaves is placed a banana leaf, the little *cement* leaves, shredded coconut, scraped taro halved, then the *beta*. On top of it are put more *cement* leaves, more *beta*, more shredded coconut, another layer of taro, then again *beta*,

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TSERA, SHELL CURRENCY WITH ORNAMENT ATTACHED

[facing p.209]